

1-37. (Cancelled)

38. (Original) A method of forming a lesion in heart tissue of a patient, comprising:
providing an electrophysiological ablating device comprising at least one electrode;
creating an opening in a patient's chest, the opening passing through the chest wall
and into the patient's thoracic cavity;
passing the electrode through the opening;
positioning the electrode adjacent to heart tissue; and
ablating the heart tissue with the electrode to create a lesion in the heart tissue while
the heart is beating.

39. (Original) The method of claim 38, comprising the steps of:
creating a second opening in the wall of the patient's heart, the second opening
passing through the wall of the heart and into an interior chamber of the heart;
positioning the electrode through the second opening and within an interior chamber
of the heart prior to the step of ablating the heart tissue with the electrode.

40. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein the step of positioning the electrode
within a chamber of the patient's heart comprises the steps of:
introducing a tubular access device into the second opening, the access device having
an inner lumen and a distal end;
inserting the electrophysiological ablation device through the inner lumen of the
tubular access device such that the electrode extends beyond the distal end of the access
device and within an interior chamber of the heart.

41. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein the opening is created intercostally
and the electrophysiological ablation device is introduced through the intercostal space.

42. (Original) The method of claim 41, wherein the opening is a small percutaneous
incision in the space between the ribs.

43. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein the opening is created without retracting the sternum.

44. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3828, wherein the opening is created without retracting the ribs.

45. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein the step of ablating the heart tissue comprises the step of applying radiofrequency energy to create the lesion in the heart tissue.

46. (Cancelled)

47. (Newly Added) A method of forming a lesion in heart tissue of a patient, comprising:
providing a device having a distal portion and comprising an energy source;
creating an opening in a patient's chest, the opening passing through the chest wall and into the patient's thoracic cavity;
passing the distal portion of the device through the opening;
positioning the distal portion of the device adjacent to heart tissue; and
ablating the heart tissue with energy delivered from the energy source to create a lesion in the heart tissue while the heart is beating.

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48. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, comprising the steps of:
creating a second opening in the wall of the patient's heart, the second opening passing through the wall of the heart and into an interior chamber of the heart;
positioning the distal portion of the device through the second opening and within an interior chamber of the heart prior to the ablating step.

49. (Newly Added) The method of claim 48, wherein the step of positioning the distal portion of the device within a chamber of the patient's heart comprises the steps of:
introducing a tubular access device into the second opening, the access device having an inner lumen and a distal end;

inserting the device through the inner lumen of the tubular access device such that the electrode extends beyond the distal end of the access device and within an interior chamber of the heart.

50. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the opening is created intercostally and the device is introduced through the intercostal space.

51. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the opening is a small percutaneous incision in the space between the ribs.

52. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the opening is created without retracting the sternum.

53. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the opening is created without retracting the ribs.

54. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the step of ablating the heart tissue comprises the step of applying radiofrequency energy to create the lesion in the heart tissue.

55. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the energy source is radiofrequency energy.

56. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the energy source is a laser.

57. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the device has a first configuration and a second configuration, and comprising the step of actuating the device to configure at least the distal portion of the device in the second configuration prior to the step of ablating.

58. (Newly Added) The method of claim 57, wherein the actuating step causes at least the distal portion of the device to deflect.

59. (Newly Added) The method of claim 57, wherein the actuating step creates a compressive force.
60. (Newly Added) The method of claim 57, comprising the step of actuating the device to create a compressive force.
61. (Newly Added) The method of claim 60, wherein the device comprises at least one electrode and the step of actuating causes the at least one electrode to be positioned adjacent the heart tissue.
62. (Newly Added) The method of claim 60, wherein the device comprises at least one electrode and wherein the positioning step positions the at least one electrode into contact with the heart tissue.
63. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the positioning step positions the distal end of the device in contact with the heart tissue.
64. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the positioning step positions the distal end of the device against the heart tissue.
65. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the device comprises a flexible tip
66. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the device comprises at least one electrode and wherein the positioning step positions the at least one electrode against the heart tissue.
67. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the device has a length of approximately 20 to 30 cm.
68. (Newly Added) The method of claim 47, wherein the device has a length of at least 20 cm.

69. (Newly Added) A method of forming a lesion in heart tissue of a patient, comprising:
providing a device having a distal portion and comprising an energy source;
creating an opening in a patient's chest, the opening passing through the chest wall
and into the patient's thoracic cavity;
passing the distal portion of the device through the opening;
positioning the distal portion of the device adjacent to heart tissue; and
delivering energy via the device to the distal portion of the device to create a lesion in
the heart tissue while the heart is beating.
70. (Newly Added) A method of forming a lesion in heart tissue of a patient, comprising:
providing a device having a distal portion and comprising an energy source;
creating an opening in a patient's chest without retracting the sternum, the opening
passing through the chest wall and into the patient's thoracic cavity;
passing the distal portion of the device through the opening;
positioning the distal portion of the device adjacent to heart tissue; and
delivering energy via the device to the distal portion of the device to create a lesion in
the heart tissue while the heart is beating.
71. (Newly Added) The method of claim 70, wherein the opening is created without
retracting the ribs.
72. (Newly Added) The method of claim 70, wherein the opening is created intercostally.
73. (Newly Added) The method of claim 72, wherein the opening is a small percutaneous
incision in the space between the ribs.